

### In the Claims

Please replace the claims with the following clean version of the entire set of pending claims, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(i). Cancel all previous versions of any pending claim.

A marked up version showing amendments to any claims being changed is provided in one or more accompanying pages separate from this amendment in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii). Any claim not accompanied by a marked up version has not been changed relative to the immediate prior version, except that marked up versions are not being supplied for any added claim or canceled claim.

C 23. Circuitry comprising:  
a metal silicide layer over a semiconductive substrate; and  
a substantially inorganic layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen in physical contact with the metal silicide layer.

BZ 24. The circuitry of claim 23 wherein the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen is over the metal silicide layer, and further comprising a layer of silicon nitride over the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen.

25. The circuitry of claim 23 wherein the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen is over the metal silicide layer, and further comprising a layer of silicon nitride over and in physical contact with the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen.

26. The circuitry of claim 23 wherein the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen comprises  $\text{Si}_x\text{N}_y\text{O}_z\text{:H}$ , wherein x is from 0.39 to 0.65, y is from 0.02 to 0.56, and z is from 0.05 to 0.33.

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Ci

27. A gate stack, comprising:  
a polysilicon layer over a semiconductive substrate;  
a metal silicide layer over the polysilicon layer;  
a layer comprising silicon, oxygen and nitrogen over the metal silicide;  
and  
a silicon nitride layer over the layer comprising silicon, oxygen and nitrogen.

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28. The gate stack of claim 27 wherein the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen comprises  $\text{Si}_x\text{N}_y\text{O}_z\text{H}_w$ , wherein x is from 0.39 to 0.65, y is from 0.02 to 0.56, and z is from 0.05 to 0.33.

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29. The gate stack of claim 27 wherein the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen physically contacts the metal silicide layer.

30. The gate stack of claim 27 wherein the silicon nitride layer physically contacts the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen.

31. The gate stack of claim 27 wherein the silicon nitride layer physically contacts the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen, and the layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen physically contacts the metal silicide layer.

Add new Claims 32-35

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32. The circuitry of Claim 23, where the substantially inorganic layer comprising silicon, nitrogen and oxygen has a thickness of from about 250Å to about 650Å.

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33. The gate stack of Claim 27, where the layer comprising silicon, oxygen and nitrogen has a thickness of from about 250Å to about 650Å.

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34. The circuitry of Claim 26, where the layer comprising silicon, oxygen and nitrogen has a thickness of from about 250Å to about 650Å.

35. The circuitry of Claim 28, where the layer comprising silicon, oxygen and nitrogen has a thickness of from about 250Å to about 650Å.

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